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THE REFORMED THEOLOGICAL REVIEW

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Nature and Grace

I. INTRODUCTION.

All over the world the Christian Church has begun to discover the necessity for a new approach. She understands that evangelism is a matter of life and death. The overwhelming majority of people, whose parents and grandparents were church-members, have drifted away from the Church and the gospel of Jesus Christ. The Church feels that she has to take up this challenge. She has, e.g., to discover which type of man she is dealing with, a type unlike the people who used to occupy the pews in our churches. The late Dr. Dietrich Bonhoeffer even dared to say that man to-day has lost his religious background and that the Church is forced to speak into a religious vacuum.⁽¹⁾ According to him this is not a loss, but a gain, because our theology up to now has built upon this religious *apriori*. Thus it is understandable that the Church and the theologians feel at a loss. We discover our impotence, our incapacity to preach the gospel for people of to-day.

We must study theology in a world which has lost its basic notions of religion and morals. Everywhere the questions arise: What is man? Is a new culture possible? Is there a common basis possible, upon which individuals and nations can build a better world? What is above, behind and underneath man, if there is anything at all?

As for the Church, there is a wide distance between the spiritual origins of the Church and present-day faith. The Church must discover that she does not have a clear-cut message. She cannot be satisfied by preaching a number of important religious, or even Christian truths. The preacher must understand that it is a venture to preach the Word of God. He must say in his own words something about God, he must add something with his own words to "the Word"—he must explain and translate and he is lost if he does not feel abashed.⁽²⁾ We must return to the

1. *Widerstand und Ergebung*, p. 183.

2. *Das Wort Gottes und die Theologie*, K. Barth, p. 99.

testimony of prophets and apostles and hear them in communion with the fathers of the Church and the Reformers. "What is our message?" That is the question of questions, which goes before the problems of "translation," before a new approach to modern man. The Biblical witnesses, who spoke by the Spirit of the living God, and the Reformers, who returned to their witness, should be in our minds in our endeavour to hear and to preach the Word of God. The unique religion of the Biblical witnesses and the unique religion of the Reformers should be the foundation upon which we stand obeying the call to preach the Gospel.

II. CONCEPTS.

The main topic of present-day theological discussion is the relationship between Nature and Grace. Everywhere in the discussion of the Church these two words return. The study within the ecumenical movement, the study of the missionary attitude towards the non-christian religions, the question of man, of culture and of the State and the community, everything deals with the relationship between Nature and Grace.

By "Nature" we mean the whole of man's existence, of his thinking, his will, his deeds, his feelings and even his endeavour to come into contact with a transcendental reality.

(a) It is very significant that the word "Nature" is not in the Bible. The words universe, nature, religion, personality, virtue, ideal are missing.⁽³⁾ The Bible uses other words, other concepts. It speaks of "heaven and earth," both being creatures and both having no longer their original purity, due to the rebellion of the powers of darkness which corrupted them. The Bible does not speak of a closed, self-sufficient whole, of an original life, free from the judgment of God. The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof (Psalm 24). It is the sphere of God's deeds and to be prepared as a dwelling place for the Lord.

(b) The Bible does not mention a combination of powers which we call "nature." The word "nature" has come into our theological terminology from Greek philosophy. The Bible does not speak of a religion as a static quality, a peculiar inclination of the soul, a kingdom of peace, resting in itself. On the contrary, it speaks of "the fear of the Lord," of the service of God in worship and in the obedience to His commandments. It is a thoroughly

3. *Bybels A.B.C.*, K. H. Miskotte, p. 158.

dynamic principle, a moving to and from the living God.

(c) Also missing from the Bible is the concept "personality" as a mystic dimension of the creature. The concept of an incorruptible spiritual reality, which is in principle self-sufficient and which develops itself, does not exist there.

(d) The Bible speaks of justice and injustice, as the right and the wrong relation to God, it speaks of faithfulness to the covenant. But the word "virtue" as an inalienable quality of man's nature is missing. The Bible does not speak of a "virtuous" man, or a "virtuous" life in the sense of philosophic morals.⁽⁴⁾

It is less complicated to define the word "grace" because here we come into the Biblical sphere. "Chen," "chesed" and "charis" mean a quality and a relation of God Himself. Grace is the willingness to be together even with sinners, i.e., with His fallen creation. Grace is never a supernatural gift of God, a sort of independent power between God and man⁽⁵⁾ as it is in Roman Catholic dogmatics. Grace involves God's goodwill from eternity to eternity. The grace of God includes His essence and His acts. Nobody can claim God's grace. He is not *obliged* to be gracious. Grace is free and undeserved. God's willingness to be together with man is never an answer to or an agreement with an inclination, quality or value of man.⁽⁶⁾ God does not owe Himself to the other party and on the other hand no human sin, nor resistance can ever end nor weaken His grace. So by grace we mean the whole of God's coming to man and the world.

III. NATURE AND GRACE IN POST-REFORMED DEVELOPMENT.

In recent theological discussions the question recurs: what is man in the encounter between God and man, between grace and nature? Is there in man a certain quality, a point of contact, or a remnant of original purity which is able to accept the Word of God? Does man possess in himself the potentiality of understanding the preaching of the Church? Is there anything apart from the unique power of the Word? In many cases these questions were answered in a preaching in which man has become the centre. His present, his past, his individuality, his nationality, his race and blood often played an important part in preaching. These things were not ruled by the Word, but rather possessed a power of revelation in themselves. In

4. *Ibid.*, p. 139.

5. *Lehrbuch der Dogmatik*, Bd II, Bartmann, Quoted in K. Barth, K. D. II, I.

6. *Kirchliche Dogmatik*, K. Barth, II, I, p. 398.

the years after 1930 we heard from Germany the "rebirth" of a nation proclaimed as a sort of revelation from God. New knowledge of race, nation and soil were connected with the Holy Scripture. No wonder that German theologians put the question: to what extent is man as preacher and hearer of the Word valuable? To what extent is man approachable in the reality of his existence? To what event are his mind, his language, his way of expressing his thoughts capable of hearing and expressing the Word? The question was raised: what kind of relation exists between non-theological (philosophic) anthropology and theological anthropology. Because of the need for the purity of preaching and the clarity of the message of the Church in the British Commonwealth (and everywhere in the world, certainly in those parts which are under the control of the Russians) it is to be hoped that many theologians will wrestle with this question. Despite much sound information in the confessions of the Reformation the churches have practically no clear doctrine in this respect.

(a) *Pietism* already decisively put man's experience and consciousness on the same level as God's Word. It preached the doctrine of the reborn man. Reformational doctrine separated by Christology, in the order of salvation, rebirth, justification and sanctification as "doctrina de gratia spiritus sancti applicatrice" from the article "de homine." Reformation dogmatics first spoke of man in creation and in fall, then of God's work in Christ and eventually of rebirth, justification and sanctification, thus emphasising that rebirth is God's work in Christ.

In Pietism began the development in which Christian experience obtained a decisive position close to God's Word.

(b) In the period of *Natural Theology* the accent fell more and more on man. Natural theology claims that man is able to know God without the Word of the H. Scripture. God's creation and providence, His law and the principles of His work in rewarding the good and punishing the bad are clearly visible in nature. Man is able to read God's handwriting in nature and history. Natural theology even claims to be able to distinguish the true personal God from the idols. It claims to be the threshold of real knowledge of the true God.

(c) *The old orthodoxy* spoke of two words of God, of two illuminations. There is a "liber naturae" and a "liber scripturae"—there is a "lumen rationis" and a "lumen

revelationis." We find traces of this distinction in the first articles of the Westminster Confession and the Confessio Belgica (remarkably enough not in the Scottish Confession of 1560). But the Reformers have so deliberately built a theology of the Word that the consequences of this twofold knowledge are not very far reaching. In their writings the Reformers have sometimes carefully treated of the possibility of a natural theology, e.g., Calvin in the first chapter of his *Institutio*, and sometimes less carefully, e.g., Luther and Calvin in their doctrine of the law. Their principle was however to found the Church and the salvation of man upon the Word of God, upon God's revelation in the H. Scripture and upon faith in the Word."⁽⁷⁾

(d) *The time of rationalism* completely lost this principle. Rational supranaturalism still put revelation above reason and supranatural rationalism based the religion of reason upon revelation, but antisuprarationalism measured revelation to reason. Theology became philosophic anthropology. The difference between the original status and the fall disappeared and this difference had been the theme of the Reformers. The concept of the *Imago Dei* was deprived of its original sense and filled with material from the science of psychology and morals. A so-called "theological" anthropology was built⁽⁸⁾ independent of revelation. The theology of this time was rooted in human religious consciousness and a human religious apriori. Nature, culture, history, community and individuality, political ideas were supposed to teach man God's will and government.

(e) The theology from the time of the Enlightenment up to the first world war (Neoprottestantism) is the continuous attempt to find a synthesis between nature and grace. At times the balance dips to "nature" and at times it dips to "grace." With gratitude however we must mention the name of Prof. Adolf Schlatter who in his exegetical works and in "Das Christliche Dogma" is very closely connected with the Reformers. Schlatter belongs in many respects to the period of the above-mentioned synthesis. He too tries to use theologically the help of general human knowledge and psychology, but in his doctrine of the sources of theological knowledge he follows the tradition of the Reformation. His works are full of the unique religion of the Bible, the religion of the Reformers.

IV. THE BARTH-BRUNNER CONTROVERSY.

Eventually it was Karl Barth who began a strong opposition to the theology of synthesis. He refused to recognise an independent source of knowledge besides revelation. Knowledge of God is solely gained from the Biblical testimony about Jesus Christ. Christology is the noetical centre for every chapter of dogmatics. Real theological anthropology, the doctrine of man, is only taught in the Word of God, which shows in Jesus Christ the original purity of man and the state of man's corruption as it is now.⁽⁹⁾ In the state of man's corruption there is no point of contact for revelation. It is God's grace which creates an open heart and an open mind and this is a *creatio ex nihilo*.

Barthian theology true to its vocation to be a purifying storm acted like a thunderclap by the sentence: "there is no point of contact." Barth of course does not deny that there is a point of contact between God and man; because the fact that faith occurs upon God's revelation presupposes that it can be communicated to man and apprehended by him as revelation coming from God. Nevertheless he puts outside the domain of theology the question as to what the point of contact is and how man can act in regard to it. It belongs entirely to the field of psychology and pedagogy.⁽¹⁰⁾ The sole "agent" of real faith in Christ is the Holy Spirit. There are no bridges from human religious consciousness to the reality in Christ and it is exclusively God's grace and not a human contribution or disposition whatsoever that effects "the falling of the scales from the eyes".⁽¹¹⁾ Barth has put these things emphatically, though one-sidedly in his "No" to Emil Brunner's "Nature and Grace." Let me first try to outline some points of Brunner's arguments.

(a) Brunner feels a close connection with Barth in the endeavour of the dialectic theology to build upon the work of the Reformers. He also wants to bring to our modern world the message of the sovereign grace of God, the doctrine of the "sola fide, sola gratia" (only by faith and only by grace). The Holy Scripture must govern all the problems of our preaching. Brunner as well as Barth is opposed to a theology of a synthesis between revelation and reason, between the Word of God and history, between God's law and the ordinances of creation.

8. *Der Mensch in der Verkündigung der Kirche*, Edmund Schlink, p. 7.

9. K.D., K. Barth, I. I. p. 135.

10. *The Christian Message in a Non-Christian World*, H. Kraemer.

11. Ibid. p. 132.

(b) Barth however tries to do his theological work too much alone. He needs correction. Barth is, e.g., right in bringing back to theological thinking the biblical and the reformed concepts of sin and grace. But it is not true that man has lost everything of his original state. The image of God in man is not lost as far as the formal side of it is concerned. *Formally* the image of God is preserved: man is still a subject—his reasonable essence is not lost, neither is his central position in creation gone, because still he has his personality and his responsiveness (*Antwortsfaehigkeit*). *Materially* however the image of God is lost. Man has lost his “*justitia originalis*.” He is a sinner and there is nothing which is not deprived by sin. Being a person, man is an image of God, but “he is not a personal person, but an anti-personal person; for the truly personal has its existence in love, the submission of the self to the will of God and is therefore an entering into communion with one’s fellow-creature, because one enjoys communion with God.”⁽¹²⁾

(c) Furthermore Brunner recognises a general revelation in nature, in conscience and in history. He cannot understand why Barth is opposed to the structure of a threefold revelation: (1) the general grace of creation and preservation, (2) the particular grace in Christ, and (3) the final grace of the Beatific Vision. Why is Barth opposed to the idea of a preserving grace which is general revelation? Why does he not accept the ordinances as the work of this preserving grace, ordinances which are the constant factors of historical and social life and which play a leading part in all ethical problems, e.g., concerning Marriage and the State? It is a fact (according to Brunner) that we have an intuition of this grace of creation and preservation. Even the pagan knows of this “lex naturae.” God does not approach stones, but men. The “quid” of personality is negativated by sin, whereas the “quod” of personality constitutes the “humanum” of every man, also that of sinners.⁽¹³⁾

The general revelation in creation and preservation gives man a vague notion of a “god.” But he ends in a question-mark, because sin has blinded his eyes. God’s special grace in Christ must open his eyes and give him faith in the true God, the Father of Jesus Christ.

12. Natural Theology (trans. by P. Fraenkel of “Natur und Gnade” by E. Brunner and “Nein” by K. Barth). p. 24.

13. Ibid. 32.

(d) With these arguments Brunner claims to follow in the footsteps of the Reformers. Calvin distinguishes between the objective and the subjective sense of the word "natura." Nature is, according to Calvin, God's original creation and consequently still recognisable by man. Man can recognise the God-given form of all creative being. In the work of Calvin, nature is never in contrast to spirit or to culture. Nature is everything which is in accordance with creation, everything which has not lapsed from the order of creation. Also Calvin says that man can obtain knowledge of God's will from nature and experience, though this is only a partial knowledge. From nature we know the hands and feet, but not the heart of God. The Holy Scripture clarifies and complements natural knowledge. Scriptural revelation serves as a magnifying-glass to natural revelation.

So Brunner claims to be a truly reformed theologian, taking up these thoughts of Calvin. Concerning Calvin's ethics, Brunner finds a continuity between the "lex naturae" and the "lex scripta," and between the "justitia civilis" and the "justitia in Christo." Calvin also builds his ethics upon his concept of the image of God, an image which is only restored, regenerated in Christ. So far Brunner. His arguments are impressive. Here speaks a great scholar and a man with a warm heart, a theologian who wants to find a basis for a new approach to modern man. Brunner was and is concerned about a world and a culture which suffered two world wars and witnessed the reality of man becoming worse than an animal. We hear in his arguments the voice of a Christian who calls to present-day man: remember your origin and hear the call of God's regenerating love in Christ.

No wonder that Barth's severe "No" deterred many Christians. Sometimes a sphere of loneliness surrounds the prophet of the Swiss Alps. It is not easy to discover that Barth in his testimony to God's design above and in man's disorder renders an obedient service to the Church and to the world. Barth is of the opinion that Brunner sustained the "German Christians" in their theology of compromise and their lenient attitude to the Nazi-ideologies. It was they who called his essay on nature and grace "a mine of treasure, a veritable gold-mine." Barth thinks that we haven't a reply to Rome if we put "Nature" and "Grace" together as Brunner does. Rome has given a dominant position to natural theology and we must get rid of this demon instead of giving him an honoured place in our

house. It cannot and may not be the task of our theological generation "to find our way back to a true 'theologia naturalis,'" as Brunner wants.

Let us listen more systematically to Barth's arguments.

(a) Barth does not deny the image of God in man, he does not deny the fact of a general revelation, nor the grace of creation and preservation. He never expounded or defended these (denying) theses and he does not plan to do so. "By natural theology I mean every (positive or negative) formulation or system which claims to be theological, i.e., to interpret divine revelation whose subject however differs fundamentally from the revelation in Jesus Christ and whose method therefore differs equally from the exposition of the H. Scripture."⁽¹⁴⁾ Natural theology is no theology at all. It is only an abyss for every theologian. It is not a part of the Christian creed.

(b) Brunner is not consistent if he wants the message of the sovereign freely electing grace of God while man himself can do nothing towards his own salvation. How can Brunner want to teach as natural theology that there is a "capacity for revelation" or "capacity for words" or a "possibility of being spoken to" when he preaches "grace" in the full sense of the word. Brunner distinguishes between a formal and a material image of God, but this distinction can never serve him to give man a capacity for revelation. God is only known by God, by His grace. Man certainly is a reasonable being, a subject and a responsive person, even as a sinner. But the "sola scriptura, sola gratia" of the Reformers does not leave any room for a capacity of man for revelation.

(c) Man is not capable—as Brunner says—of seeing God's creation as the work of the living God and as His revelation. Natural theology, comparative religion, philosophy and culture can never know the *true* God. Their gods are idols or demons. In spite of God's works in creation and preservation (Rom. 1:18)—in spite of "God making Himself plain to mankind in creation, in nature and history, man has exchanged the glory of the immortal God for the semblance of the likeness of mortal man . . . they have exchanged the truth of God for untruth." The possibility of a natural knowledge of God has practically become ignorance. Natural knowledge of God is in practice ignorance.

(d) Barth cannot speak of a threefold grace. There is only one grace in Christ and it is God's patience and

14. Ibid. pp. 74, 5.

Christ's intercession which upholds the world. In the Bible everything which Brunner calls "grace of preservation" is related to prophesy and fulfilment, to law and gospel, to the covenant and the Messiah. Where does Brunner find such a thing as an abstract grace of preservation? State and history are man's actions and products of human possibilities. They are used by the patience of God—they serve in God's design to rescue man. They belong to the sphere of the "voluntas Dei arcana," and their purpose will be revealed in God's future. They are no part of the "voluntas Dei revelata"—it is not given to man to discern divine revelation in them.⁽¹⁵⁾ (Prof. K. H. Miskotte at Leiden often emphasised the extreme importance of this distinction for our religious instruction, our preaching and our pastoral care.)

Barth denies that State and Marriage are forms of a grace of creation and preservation, having a power of revelation in themselves. All our theories of these "ordinances" are subjectively determined. God's will and God's gifts are only known in Jesus Christ. Man as a sinner can only find his "justification and sanctification in Christ," all his relations with his fellow-men included.

(e) There is no point of contact in man. Every dealing with a point of contact has its due place in the doctrine of Christ, in the doctrine of the H. Spirit, but not in the doctrine of man. St. Paul's words of "dead in sins" and "alive in Christ," his words about "a new creature" should be taken seriously. Paul nowhere presupposes a point of contact in man. It is impossible to find such a doctrine in the Epistle to the Romans, in which God's *one* grace in creation and preservation and finally in Christ is proclaimed. The intention of St. Paul is to emphasise that there is no excuse for man when he worships the creature and the manifestations of God, rather than the Creator. Again natural knowledge of God is in practice ignorance. (Formulation of Edmund Schlink: "Der Mensch in der Verkündigung des Wortes" pg 159.)

(f) According to Barth, Brunner's interpretation of Calvin is wrong. Brunner disregards the place of the Reformers in the history of dogma. The Reformers concentrated on the doctrine of justification and did not react properly to the theses of Augustine and Thomas concerning the interrelation and synthesis of grace and nature. They did not emphasise the evangelical knowledge of God as

15. *Reformierte Dogmatik*, Heinrich Heppe, p. 51.

opposed to R.C. knowledge of God. Although Calvin touched the noetical problem in his introduction to the *Institutio* and even gave a rather important place to the knowledge of God in pagan philosophy, he preached in fact the theological impotence of natural man. Christology, the doctrine of the unfree will and the justification are in the centre of his teaching. It is impossible to use these small accents in Calvin as material for a "new task of present-day theologians: to find a true natural theology." We cannot possibly find in Calvin a continuity of natural knowledge and knowledge by revelation.

V. CONCLUSIONS AND PERSPECTIVES.

(1) What do we need? The theological direction of Brunner, his mild attitude, his understanding of the position of neoprottestantism, his open mind for the problems of our present-day world and even his affinity to the R.C. doctrine of the "analogia entis" (analogy of God's being and man's being)? Or do we need Barth's "No" to Neoprottestantism and Rome. Karl Barth has emphasised that the gospel has its own dimensions, its own dynamics. At the "Rencontres Internationales" in Geneva, September 1949, where leading thinkers of Europe were assembled, discussing the possibility of a new humanism, Barth ventured to lecture on the "Humanism of God" in the Incarnation.⁽¹⁶⁾ There he claimed that the message of the Church has its own authority, an authority derived from the revelation of God in Christ. It is my strong conviction that we must preach the gospel as a message which has its authority and dynamics only from God. We must not expect anything from a preparatory work done by our anthropological thoughts. Brunner, e.g., wants to clear the field before the seeds of the gospel are sown, by an "eristic theology."⁽¹⁷⁾ He attempts to demonstrate something of the existential need of man and so to prepare the preaching of the gospel. I think we all try a sort of preparatory work. Auxiliary science is necessary. Philology, history, psychology and sociology are sciences which render excellent services to the theologians. Human knowledge can tell us many important things about man. The auxiliary sciences however don't belong to the domain of theology, which is the science of revelation. "Of Him and through Him and to Him are all things."

(2) Dr. Edmund Schlink has pointed out in his book "Der Mensch in der Verkündigung der Kirche"⁽¹⁸⁾, that

16. *Humanismus, Theologische Studien*, K. Barth.

17. *Natural Theology*, p. 20.

18. Op. cit. p. 260.

every preaching has to obey two words of God. We receive the commandment to say to our neighbour what God wants to say to him—we do that in the explanation of the H.S. That is the commandment. We do this however empowered by the certain knowledge that God Himself is willing to speak through these our poor human words. That is for us the gospel. God's work is never dependent on our service. "He comforts sometimes where we hurt—He opens the eyes of His reality, where we explain our theories and He sometimes rescues and gives His blessing, where we annoy and scandalise."⁽¹⁹⁾ Nevertheless we get the commandment: preach the gospel to your brother—speak to him in his existential reality—translate the gospel for him—study his language, his circumstances, his character. Avail yourself of the auxiliary sciences for a better approach. But let the "you" of your brother never become a source of knowledge for the preaching. God's commandment has its proper place within the joyful gospel: God reveals Himself.

(3) In another part of his book Dr. Schlink tries to answer the question of the language and the patterns of human thought.

Brunner's argument of the "formal image of God," of man being a subject despite of sin, a responsive person and the centre of creation, are so attractive that many ministers have said: "Of course there is our language; our capacity for thinking, our feeling for right and wrong, for, truth and untruth, our conscience"—thus too quickly neglecting the endeavour of a true theology of the word.

Dr. Schlink has studied the morphology of human thought and he comes to the conclusion that real faith in God is always a turning away from the human self. Thinking is not an act which can be abstracted from the human self. Thinking is an existential act, it includes the whole man in his real situation. *Jadang* and *ginoskein* in the H.S. involve a total relation to God and to fellow-man. There are innumerable patterns of thought and all of them obtain a new direction, a new order, if the line of the revelation crosses the horizontal level of human thought. Dr. Schlink analyses the pattern of thought of St. Paul, St. John and St. James and comes to the conclusion that God reveals Himself in His Word by availing Himself freely of the services of human thought and human concepts. God uses their function freely and with authority.

19. *Ibid.*, p. 18.

God's revelation is also revelation of judgment. Again and again human words and thoughts are broken down and renewed in the service of the Lord.⁽²⁰⁾ Human symbols must serve the revelation and often express something which is quite the opposite of their profane meaning. A careful study, e.g., of the Biblical concepts of "father" and of "time," a study of the preaching of our Lord's parables and the Biblical preaching of God's free election, His reconciliation . . . leads to the conclusion that the Word of God is not a continuation and affirmation of our logic and ethical thinking. The Word avails himself freely and mightily of our forms and contents of thinking. However, the science of the morphology of human thought is very young and further results must still be expected. The direction of Schlink's research is extremely valuable to show us the free and sovereign character of revelation.

(4) In Holland two books have been published on the relation between Rome and the Reformation. One is entitled "Discussion with Rome" (Dr. H. van der Linde) and the other "Conflict with Rome" (Prof. Dr. J. C. Berkouwer).

The more we study the dogmatic position of Rome, the more we discover that the word "conflict" is the best expression for our relation to Rome. Rome has accepted the Thomistic doctrine as normative for all theological reflection. "Gratia non tollit sed perficit naturam" (grace does not abolish nature but makes her perfect). Grace and nature are interrelated—they need each other and together they constitute the man of God's intention. The way of man is made in degrees—man goes with his preliminary gifts of creation to his final destination in glory. By the call of grace nature can be lifted up above its own character. Nature is capable of being the servant of grace and is bound to follow her. Grace is the way and the (more or less independent) intermediary of God, by which man is promoted to glory.

It is the task of Reformed preaching to proclaim the message of the Bible. The Bible is the book of the Incarnation and not of the Deification.⁽²¹⁾ We must venture to preach the unique character of the Gospel. It is not the task of present-day theologians to find the true place for a *theologia naturalis* but to build upon the foundation of the Reformers and fight our conflict with Rome. *Sola fide—sola gratia—sola scriptura.*

Melbourne.

M. W. J. GEURSEN.

20. Op. cit. p. 93.

21. *Natuur en Genade*, O. Noordmans.

Ecumenical Responsibility

Nothing is more painful for a theological author than the fact that what he has to say might or even must hurt another Christian heart. This was the reason why only reluctantly I complied with the kind request of the editors of this Review to write on the Ecumenical Movement. I am deeply indebted to the readers that they took so patiently what must have sounded very strange to many of them. I am not less indebted to the Rev. John Garrett whom we all like and whose work we admire even where we must differ from him for the way in which he has voiced his criticism. It was, of course, his duty as Secretary of the Australian Council of the World Council of Churches to reply to my article. My answer to his letter is not to be of a controversial nature. Nor am I going to repeat what I have written. I want to make only a few points which inevitably will come up in the ecumenical discussions during the next generation and which must be answered also by the Churches in Australia.

First of all, I want to assure the readers that I have studied the literature produced by the modern Ecumenical Movement including the writings which Mr. Garrett recommends to me. It is not from lack of information that I speak, but rather from a different understanding of the facts and the documents. I know that the World Council of Churches as such cannot celebrate the Lord's Supper. But the fact that it invites churches of various convictions to arrange celebrations in connection with its meetings is even not denied by my worthy opponent. He also knows the discussions concerning this question which have preceded and followed meetings like that of Amsterdam. Was Karl Barth really wrong when he expressed the idea that it might be better to have no communion service at all instead of several communions, the participants of which were not quite sure whether all of these celebrations were really the sacrament instituted by Christ? If the World Council arranges in this way such celebrations it presupposes that they are one and the same sacrament under various human forms. Supposing the Reformation was right in its judgment on the sacrifice of the mass, how can a Lutheran or a Presbyterian encourage the celebration of such mass? How can, on the other hand, an Orthodox or an Anglo-Catholic encourage a celebration which he must regard as an adulteration of the true sacrament? With all due respect for the deepest conviction of another Christian and all that which is sacred to him, I am not allowed to encourage

that which I cannot but regard as heresy. Here lies the deepest problem of the W.C.C. It does not and cannot see that within Christendom there are not only differences which may be overcome by discussions, but also heresies which never will give way to the truth voluntarily and which must be excluded from the Church. There are, indeed, traces of the church also in heretical communions. Nobody would deny that, and I as a Lutheran would not dare to find much more than such *vestigia ecclesiae* in my own church. But this fact that traces of the church are to be found in almost all denominations does not entitle me to pass over what the New Testament clearly teaches of my duty to separate myself from heresy (1 Tim. 6,20f.; 2 Tim. 4,3ff.; Titus 3,10f.; 1 John 4,1ff.; 2 John 7ff.; Rev. 2,9f.). I wonder what St. Paul, St. John and the Fathers of the Church would say about the document "The Church, the Churches and the World Council of Churches" which carefully avoids speaking of that mortal danger which threatens the existence of every church, also my own church?

This leads to the question of "Evangelism." One can say, of course, that the Council does not evangelise itself except where officers may be invited. If, however, one of the tasks of the Council is "To support the churches in their task of evangelism," the Council must know what evangelism is, and this presupposes that it knows what the Gospel is. What, then, is the Gospel, if it can be proclaimed irrespective of the fact that there is no agreement among the members of the World Council of Churches as to what the doctrinal basis of the Council "Jesus Christ as God and Saviour" actually means. The divinity of Christ is obviously not understood in the same way by modern Protestants who deny the Virgin Birth and the bodily resurrection of Christ and by Eastern Orthodox Christians who strictly adhere to the Nicene Creed. The understanding of Christ as the "Saviour" is not the same with Quakers and Lutherans, with Catholics and Baptists, with Methodists and Monophysites. Even such fundamental facts like the Incarnation and the Atonement are interpreted differently. What is the doctrine taught at the Institute at Bossey? According to what principles are articles on Evangelism and other highly theological subjects selected for or rejected from the "Ecumenical Review"? For nobody would say that the individual author has the sole responsibility for what is said and not said.

As to the organisation of churches, church federations and church unions I have never said that the World Council itself is doing this work. What I have said and what I must repeat is that the World Council supports and encourages the establishment of such organisations. In the great struggle in Germany after the war between the unionistic "Evangelical Church in Germany" and a solution of the church problem along confessional lines the World Council was not neutral. The various "National Councils" from the N.C.C.C.U.S.A. to Indonesia in which an "essential oneness" of the churches is presupposed which does not exist and, at any rate, is not the oneness of the church according to the New Testament, had at least the moral support of the World Council of Churches, and the same is true of the "United Church of South India," as the articles in the "Ecumenical Review" show and the older publications of the World Conference on Faith and Order as e.g. the report for Edinburgh, 1937, "A Decade of Objective Progress in Church Unity 1927-36" by H. P. Douglass. The fantastic plan of a future Reunited Church of Australia which has caused this whole discussion is another example of the activities of the World Council of Churches in the field of church union. It has never been heard that Geneva has disapproved of this plan and the various similar plans for the Churches of South East Asia.

This criticism does in no way interfere with the plans of the Churches of Anglo-Saxon background for a home reunion which would cover all these churches throughout the world. On the contrary, we can only wish that some of those divisions which more or less have become obsolete might be overcome. What we Lutherans object to is only the attempt to see the divisions of Christendom mainly from the point of view of these churches. We are aware of the danger of seeing the history of the church from the point of view of the Lutheran Reformation only. What we are interested in is not our Lutheran Church as a separate body. But we are interested in the Word of God and in the Sacraments of Christ. We cannot think of a real union of Churches apart from the true unity which the New Testament clearly teaches, Eph. 4,1ff. Maybe that the churches fail to reach agreement as to what the "one baptism" is. Such tragic failure could never justify an attitude which leaves the question open. A Catholic and a Baptist who, each in his way, take seriously their beliefs concerning this sacrament are perhaps nearer to one

another than two members of a modern union-church who have agreed to disagree.

One last word may be permitted with respect to the problem of responsibility. The great global organisations which now are coming into existence as ecclesiastical parallels to the global organisations in the field of politics are in the great danger of leaving the responsibility for what they do or fail to do to their constituent bodies. It is very easy to say: The World Council of Churches is no Super-church. At any rate it is more than a mere council or federation, and nobody knows whether or not the future of these organisations—I would say that also of an organisation like the Lutheran World Federation—will be a striking parallel to those “super-states” like the U.S.A., the U.S.S.R., the Commonwealth of Australia and similar political bodies which in future may arise in Europe and Asia. At least one “super-church” has already been formed, the “Evangelical Church in Germany.” The Roman Pope, an Anglican Bishop, the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, a Lutheran or a Methodist synod have their responsibilities. Who is responsible for the actions of the World Council or the Lutheran World Federation? The constituent churches, will be the answer. But how can they speak? How often have they the opportunity of speaking? How can the member-churches supervise that which their young people learn at Bossey and in groups and meetings especially arranged for them? Concerning the Pope can. 1556 C.I.C. says: “Prima sedes a nemine iudicatur.” This, however, does not exclude that he is a poor sinner who has to go to confession each Friday. Who confesses the sins of the great Committees of the Ecumenical Movement? Obviously nobody. Their sins are attributed to the member-churches. They themselves are as sinless as the great political organisations of modern mankind are. This is perhaps the most urgent question put to all Christians by the rise of the modern ecumenical organisations. What can be done in order to prevent a new invasion of the world into the church by an imitation of secular forms of mass-organisations and methods of government? And this implies the other question: What can be done in order to preserve the offices and institutions to whom the Lord has entrusted the responsibility for His church on earth? The ministry of the Word and the Sacrament and the Christian congregation are the strong pillars of the Church. Wherever anonymous global organisations arise with the good intention to serve the ministry and the con-

gregation—even the pope calls himself “servus servorum Dei”—everything has to be done in order to protect the rights and duties of the divinely appointed offices and institutions. Otherwise the Church must decay.

HERMANN SASSE.

Adelaide.

Basel and Bultmann, I

The Swiss newspaper, *Basler Nachrichten*, recently reported a lecture, “Wahrheit und Unheil der Entmythologisierung” (Truth and damage of ‘Entmythologisierung’), given by Karl Jaspers at a conference of liberal theologians. The opinion of this philosopher from Basel appears to be of sufficient importance to be summarised in English, though we have only the information of the above-mentioned newspaper. The second voice from Basel who (more extensively) has discussed the work of Bultmann is the theologian, Karl Barth, in Volume 37 of his series, *Theologische Studien*. Let us first listen to the philosopher.

Jaspers begins: Religion cannot be founded upon any philosophy. Religion is for the philosopher something which should be conquered, but if conquered he would be shocked by the vacuum which would appear. Jaspers feels a stranger in the world of theology, but it may be that a wanderer in a strange country could discover things easier than the one who lives there. Moreover, the work of Bultmann demands a careful study from the side of the philosopher.

Bultmann’s first presupposition is a result of his opinion of modern science and the so-called scientific world-picture which (according to Bultmann) divides the unity of man. Jaspers cannot agree with this presupposition because the decisive characteristic of modern science is that it deliberately abandons a so-called world-picture. Not very many people (and among them Bultmann) really understand modern science, in spite of the fact that its universal development can be grasped by everyone who is able to think. Modern science does not work so disintegratingly as Bultmann supposes. For example, it does not attack the faith in Jesus’ resurrection. The resurrection was for Jesus’ contemporaries just as “unbelievable” as it is for us. The natural realism and the naturalism of the people 2000 years ago differs little from modern thinking. The human inclination is to believe something absurd or superstitious.

Bultmann's second mistake is that for his interpretation he uses a ready-made philosophy which must bring clearness in a divided human existance, endlessly and abysmally living with fear of death. He uses only Heidegger's book, *Sein und Zeit*, and presents a knowledge which is not born of a disinterested hunger for knowledge, but is only a fundamental experience of man. This fundamental experience is a very serious one, but philosophically wrong and worthless. Bultmann uses existential conclusions of human experience as if they were scientific products of knowledge. With them he tries to explain Biblical texts. Here all real philosophy has embarked. There is a difference between an existential *analysis* and existential *thinking*. Bultmann supposes to know something unconditionally which can only exist in a conditional and responsible acting. Things, which sound in Heidegger's book, become toneless in Bultmann's work. His existential analysis, says Jaspers, has no life.

Therefore, Jaspers explains, in a philosophic argument in a nut-shell, that everything we really are belongs to us in an immediate experience. However, the immediate experience is not an object of knowledge. Philosophically speaking we live in a clearness in which the "I" and my knowledge are divided. Clarity needs visible or thinkable images. The existential philosopher needs these images as clarifying signs. He needs "Chiffren und Mythen," in which the images of every possible existence are present to him. They are an echo of the things which exist.

Bultmann, however, considers that mythical thinking is something of the past. He wants to translate into categories of modern thinking the partial truth hidden in this old mythical thinking. This is inconsistent with its very character. The myth which, for example, tells us something about saints and gods, gives an impression of something but not a true picture.

Moreover, Jaspers criticises Bultmann's judgment on the value of the different books of the Bible (his preference for Paul and depreciation of the Old Testament). "What is the theological meaning of Bultmann's endeavour to adapt biblical faith to present-day thinking? I breathe again as soon as I read something of Karl Barth, because I hear in his work something which is strange to me: a faith which I do not partake; but it speaks."

Bultmann wants to purify and nevertheless to maintain the absurdity of the Christian faith. It does not matter very much whether Bultmann is a liberal or an orthodox

man. His position of "the justification by faith" is strange to liberal thinking. Undoubtedly Bultmann is an orthodox man and he is a great thinker. But he ventures something (philosophy) of which he has not a clear knowledge. And with his way of saying things no minister could preach to his congregation.

(To be concluded.)

M. W. J. GEURSEN.

Melbourne.

Book Reviews

PETER: DISCIPLE, APOSTLE, MARTYR.

By Oscar Cullmann (S.C.M.), 1953, pp. 252; 18/-.

This latest work of Cullmann to appear in an English edition consists of a lengthy historical study of 150 pages, followed by 80 pages on the exegetical and theological questions involved in the discussion. Part I—the historical section—contains three chapters in which the author, using the techniques of historical enquiry, asks what can be surely known or properly inferred about Peter as a disciple of Jesus, as apostle in the primitive Church and as martyr. The sources of our knowledge of Peter as disciple and apostle are the documents of the New Testament. Our information about his residence in Rome and his martyrdom depends on traditions preserved in later literary sources, though his martyrdom is at least hinted at in certain N.T. passages. Cullmann examines all these documents again, and places beside them the evidence of liturgical sources and of recent excavations in Rome—this last not the least interesting and informative section of the book.

Throughout, Cullmann's conclusions are very much more positive than Protestant scholars have sometimes allowed themselves to be about the significant role played by Peter among the disciples and apostles, and about his stay in Rome and his martyrdom there. His representative position in the circle of the disciples, articulating their hopes and fears; his leadership of the Primitive Church in Jerusalem, derived as it was from the double commission at the hands of the Incarnate and the Risen Lord; his subsequent handing-over of the leadership to James in order that he (Peter) might lead the Jewish Christian mission; the assertion that Peter stood much closer to Paul theologically than did other members of the Jerusalem Church-mission: all this and much more, as described by Cullmann, will cause many readers to revise their understanding of authority within and of the developing mission of the early Church. The last ghosts of Tuebingen seem to have been laid.

Having cleared the ground by minute and careful historical enquiry, Cullman begins his theological section (Part II of the book) with a careful exegesis of Matthew 16:17-19. Here he can agree neither with the more radical modern critics who deny the genuineness of the saying, nor with the reformers and their modern counterparts who see in Jesus' saying little more than the declaration that it is on faith such as Peter's that Christ's Church it to be built. The saying is genuine but (suggests Cullmann, making a positive use of form-critical methods) misplaced: his own suggestion is that it belongs to the dialogue found in a passion context at Luke 22,31ff.; it was found by Matthew as an isolated fragment in his independent source and incorporated by a characteristic Matthaean method into the story of the confession of Peter at Caesarea Philippi. But be that as it may, the saying refers to Peter as a person, to his personal pre-eminence among the apostles. This pre-eminence was confirmed by the fact that he was the first to whom the risen Lord appeared. He was to assume the leadership of the post-Ascension Church. On the foundation (in terms of chronology as well as faith) of the apostles and of this apostle in particular is built the faith and life of the whole Church from then until now.

Readers of Cullmann's "Christ and Time" will not be surprised to find in his final doctrinal chapter a distinction between the

one-for-all element in Peter's apostolic commission (what belongs to the mid-point of time) and what belongs to the Church of subsequent generations—and of the relation between the two. This chapter defines in a fresh way the theological grounds for controversy between the reformed theologian and the upholders of Roman Catholic claims. Indeed one of the two most interesting things about this book as a whole is the tone of friendly controversy in which it is written. One can believe that the hope expressed by the author in his foreword, that his frank statements will be welcomed by his Roman Catholic friends and fellow-theologians, has been fulfilled. We must be grateful that the best writing on this as on so many other theological subjects is in our day no longer polemical. The other fascinating matter raised by this book is the relation between an historical and a theological question. There is no simple way of defining this relation, but in this book Cullmann has once more (in company with many other leading Biblical theologians of our day) shown that many of our problems arise from confusions and unexamined assumptions about the nature of the two activities and the relation between them. Whether Cullmann's own implied redefinition is entirely satisfactory is a question requiring further consideration.

The book is lucidly written, and, even when the method of presentation leads to some repetition, is always readable. The copious footnotes and many sections of the text give us cross references to other recent work, continental European, British and (to a lesser extent) American—though some Anglicans may demur at the use of the definite article in the sentence: "The Anglican standpoint (on apostolic succession) is represented by K. E. Kirk, *The Apostolic Ministry*, 1945, especially the essay by G. Dix, 'The ministry in the early Church'."

J. D. McCaughey.

Melbourne.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE CHURCHES OF GALATIA.

By Herman N. Ridderbos (Eerdmans, Grand Rapids), 1953, pp. 238; \$3.50.

COMMENTARY ON THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS.

By F. W. Grosheide (Eerdmans, Grand Rapids), 1953, pp. 415; \$5.00.

These two volumes are among the first to appear in "The New International Commentary on the New Testament" which is being published by Eerdmans under the general editorship of N. B. Stonehouse, Professor of New Testament in Westminster Theological Seminary, Philadelphia. This new commentary, planned to comprise 17 volumes, calls for notice. It has been "undertaken to provide earnest students of the New Testament with an exposition that is thorough and abreast of modern scholarship and at the same time loyal to the Scriptures as the infallible Word of God." One volume in the series, that on the Gospel of Luke by Norval Geldenhuys (a minister of the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa), has already been published separately in England by Marshall, Morgan and Scott. The other volumes in preparation are by Profs. Stonehouse, John Murray and John Skilton of Westminster; Alexander Ross and E. K. Simpson formerly of Free Church College, Edinburgh; Profs. E. P. Groenewald and J. J. Muller of the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa; and F. F. Bruce and Philip Hughes of England. The authors of the two volumes under review are the Professors of

New Testament in the Free University of Amsterdam and the Kampen Theological Seminary respectively. No one will mistake the theological flavour of this new series. It is a very great pleasure to welcome such an enterprise at the present time, grounded as it is on the orthodox Reformed doctrine of the Word of God, and displaying, in the three volumes which have so far appeared, such a high standard of scholarship and exegetical skill. It is in particular satisfactory that English readers should also be thus introduced to some of the best Biblical scholars in the Dutch Reformed Church, whose work is too little known. One must remark the absence of "English" scholars from the contributors so far; Mr. F. F. Bruce, though now at Sheffield, is a Scotsman, and the Rev. Philip Hughes, though now in London, is from the Church of England in South Africa.

In the two volumes under review the exposition is based on the American Standard Version. Each short section of the text is followed by the verse-by-verse commentary on the section. The commentary is thus placed at once at the service of those who know no or little Greek. Throughout, however, are footnotes which discuss points bearing directly on the Greek text or on other strictly critical matters, and these footnotes, though necessarily compressed, are pretty comprehensive. On the lexicographical side both authors give consideration to such learning as is contained in, e.g., Strack-Billerbeck and Kittel's "*Theologisches Woerterbuch*," and both appear to be up to date in their knowledge of Hellenistic grammar and syntax.

Neither writer allows questions of critical introduction to obtrude more than is necessary on the main task of exposition. There are 23 pages of introduction in the Galatian commentary to nearly 200 pages of exposition, and only five pages of introduction to nearly 400 of exposition in I Corinthians. It is fair to add, however, that where thorny problems arise in the course of exposition, they are fully faced and competently dealt with.

Prof. Ridderbos, while holding that "a positive decision is not possible" in the matter of the destination of the Epistle to the Galatians, nevertheless thinks that "the evidence . . . points to South rather than to North Galatia." He regards Paul's visit of chapter 2 as identical with the apostolic council visit of Acts 15 (A.D. 48 or 49) and therefore thinks that "the letter was written not long afterwards, probably in Corinth, where the apostle stayed for a while during his second missionary journey," i.e., in 50 or 51.

Professor Ridderbos has succeeded admirably with the commentary. He deals judiciously with the famous *cruces* (e.g., the Haga-Sarah passage), but the general impression is of the overwhelming importance for faith to-day of the basic religious issue which called forth the letter in the first place.

Prof. Grosheide has a more intricate task with the diverse matters of I Corinthians, but he succeeds not less well. The reviewer appreciated especially his treatment of the passages concerning the Lord's Supper and spiritual gifts. With a thoroughness typical of the tradition in which these two scholars stand, they both give scrupulous attention to almost every word and detail of their respective epistles.

Prof. Grosheide has apparently written in English himself; Prof. Ridderbos' work has been translated by Henry Zylstra. ("Jerome" would have been preferable to "Hieronymus" on p. 94 of the latter translation.)

We look forward with eagerness to the appearance of the rest of the volumes in this valuable New Commentary.

Sydney.

D. W. B. ROBINSON.

EARLY CHRISTIAN WORSHIP.

Oscar Cullmann (S.C.M. Studies in Biblical Theology, No. 10), 1953, pp. 124; 8/-.

This volume is an important contribution to the study of Christian Worship. It consists of two parts. In the first Cullman studies the main sources (in the New Testament and in Christian literature to the year 150) in order to discover the basic character of early Christian Worship. He sheds light upon the place and time of early Church services, and searches out the several component parts of the worship. The preaching, the Maranatha prayer, the Lord's Supper are all set within "the blinding light" of our Lord's resurrection. The author is critical of the modern text book distinction between two kinds of worship, i.e., the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Supper; and in opposition to this theory advances what he calls "a convincing argument for the view that as a rule there was no gathering of the community without the breaking of bread." It is a refreshing thing to find a discussion of the combination of free worship and liturgical restrictiveness in the earlier services of the Church.

Cullmann never loses sight of the purpose of Christian worship: and he claims that all the numerous parts of worship, including the speaking with tongues, contribute to the one aim of—the coming of the Risen Christ in the peak of worship—the Lord's Supper. This really means that even if Hebrew and Pagan elements exist in Christian Worship, the aim was something quite new, namely the upbuilding of the Church by the Risen Lord, who "takes form in the gathering itself."

In the second portion of the book Cullmann makes a specialised and detailed study of the Fourth Gospel as being "outstandingly valuable as a source for the question of the early Christian service of worship." The first chapter in this portion, on "The Evangelist's Purpose," is somewhat difficult, but an understanding of it is essential to the liturgical study in the remaining fourteen chapters. It remains to say that if the deductions made by Cullmann are correct, and if his nine conclusions are established, then there should follow some great and much needed changes in the Reformed theory and practice of worship.

Melbourne.

DONOVAN F. MITCHELL.

WIDERSTAND UND ERGEBUNG.

By Dietrich Bonhoeffer (Chr. Kaiser Verlag, Muenchen), 1952, pp. 286; D.M. 9.80.

With deep respect I took into my hands a book, which bears the marks of being edited with a great devotion. An English translation, "Letters and Papers from Prison,"* has recently appeared. Bonhoeffer was one of the younger German theologians who could have been now a leading spirit of the ecumenical movement, of the Church in the world. He was cruelly murdered however in a German concentration camp some hours before the American army of liberation arrived.

It is understandable that one reads with a devout interest the letters and papers of a man who felt compelled to return to his homeland from the safety of America, because he was convinced of the disastrous consequences of the Nazi Regime. The gospel of Christ was for him a living reality—his existence was that of a true Christian, though he did not feel himself a hero at all. I think he

* S.C.M. 1953, pp. 190; 12/6.

would have agreed with the picture Graham Greene draws of the priest in his novel "The Power and the Glory." He could not escape his call though he was naturally a peaceful and contemplative mind. He was a gallant opponent of National Socialism in spite of his own character. The friends admired this calm and decisive man. But hear how he knows himself:

"Am I really as others see me?
Or only as I know myself to be—
Restless, desiring, sick like a bird in a cage?
Who am I? This lonely questioning torments me.
Whoever I may be, Thou knowest me.
Thine I am, O my God."

Not only these circumstances make Bonhoeffer well known. I hope that his lectures on "Creation and Fall," lectures for students in Berlin in the thirties will be translated, because they are an original and inspiring help to preach the message of the first chapters of the Bible to modern man. Furthermore I know no better commentary on the Sermon on the Mount than Bonhoeffer's "Die Nachfolge" (The Imitation). His "Ethics" are posthumously published—they are sketchy, but full of original thoughts. In "Widerstand und Ergebung" Bonhoeffer speculates about the future of Christianity in the world to come. We need the emergence of a new spiritual aristocracy in a time of outward and inward uniformity. A new spiritual elite will decide whether there will be a culture or not. The time is coming in which the Church will be deprived of many old privileges. Revolutionary events will destroy the old positions and Christians can only share unselfishly the sufferings of mankind. All old and self-evident words of the Church will appear to be powerless. We must gain a new understanding of the Biblical message and translate it for present-day man. This must be a translation by our words and even more by our existence. "I discover that again and again I return to the Old Testament. Only he who knows that the Name of God is ineffable may pronounce the Name of Jesus. Only he who loves the earth and life like the people of the Old Testament did, may speak of resurrection and of a new world. He who struggles to obey the commandments of God may speak of Grace; and he who knows the wrath and anger of God towards His enemies as an existing reality can experience forgiveness and love."

Bonhoeffer thinks that modern man has lost his natural sense of religion—his vague and general feelings about Power, Authority, Providence and Guidance. "We are facing a time without religion—present-day man has lost the ability to be 'religious'." This natural religious sense was the presupposition of the preaching of the Christian Church for 19 centuries. We now must preach the Gospel without these false presuppositions and be aware of its intrinsic value! Karl Barth has begun to discover this and has tried to liberate theology from this natural religiosity. But he has given a theological positivism, a congenial system of dogmas which does not approach modern thought. A new confessing, with new formulations and other emphases must be born in answering the questions of our fellow-men. We are tempted to quote and to quote out of these treasures of thought. Put this book on your desk and study every day a small part of it. You will be shocked and you will be comforted. You will discover unimagined perspectives.

THE MEANING OF EXISTENCE.

By Dom Mark Pontifex and Dom Illtyd Trethowan (Longmans) 1953, pp. 177; 21/- (Aust.).

The purpose of the book is explicitly stated—viz., a fresh approach to traditional (Thomist) metaphysics, by picking up aspects of experience normally overlooked, and revealing their implications for natural theology. The authors believe that there is an affinity between the metaphysical analysis of the experience of existing and proofs for the existence of God.

The first part by Dom Mark Pontifex is delightfully lucid and has the merit of readability and cogency. He leaves no doubt as to his own conclusions; which cannot be said with equal force of the second part by Dom Illtyd. Admittedly it was Dom Mark's business to make the case and Dom Illtyd's to deal with an assorted bag of criticisms, so that his contribution necessarily lacks the completeness of Dom Mark's. Both agree however that the "double-notion view of existence is the heart of the Book."

Dom Mark begins by crossing swords with the Logical Positivists over the meaning of the word "existence." His point is that the very quality of assertibility about things is a tacit admission of their existence at least in a limited sense. He proceeds to a definition of existence, rejecting four inadequate and misleading definitions, and, steering his way dexterously between logical terminology, arrives at the view that existence is the fundamentally unifying principle behind phenomena. It shows itself in an unique condition of total dependence. Here he has touched the "double-notion," and therefore goes on to deal with the Source of Existence. "What is qualified and limited in assertions regarding things can't apply to the source of assertibility, otherwise it is simply a thing and not the source of dissimilar things. The Source of Existence is unique in that it can't be dependent. It must be unqualified."

It is evident that existence has been used to two senses; and the only way to avoid contradiction in the use of terms is by use of Analogy—which is the next subject in order to treatment by Dom Mark. Analogy he finds to be inadequate but suggestive.

His method leads him inevitably to the Ontological Argument in its aposteriori form; though here again he modifies Aquinas by extending "the principle of sufficient reason" to cover both the finite and the infinite as mutually related; i.e., not merely to the finite world as demonstrable.

He arrives at the same terminus as Aquinas, though he gets there much more convincingly. He succeeds in his own confessed aim and presents an excellent case within the limits of inferential logic.

He has a thorough acquaintance with the works of modern French Roman Catholic and English Anglo-Catholic writers; and quotes them effectively to support his own presentation of the double-notion of existence. He may be Thomist in letter, but hardly in spirit; and it is Augustine surely who informs his judgments that "concrete metaphysics finds the presence of God in the analysis of being" (p. 159). He shows himself in sympathy with Anselm (even if he would like Anselm to have expressed himself differently); clearly is this the case when he regrets the "false opposition between reflexive philosophy and ontology" (p. 170).

The book is a plea for inferential logic so greatly beloved of Roman Catholic theology and philosophy; and it passes over into

attempted proofs for the existence of God. The logic is brilliant, but the proof lags. Both authors fail to produce any philosophical justification for calling "the Infinite" or the "Source of Being" God. They make the equation, but not on purely philosophical grounds. They are unable overcome the inherent short comings of demonstrable metaphysics.

The thesis of the "double-notion view of existence" is a great philosophic gain; and the book argues it extremely well. What it does, therefore, is to put a first-class philosophical apologetic into the theists' hands.

Protestant readers might be slightly puzzled by the reference to the "ontologist heresy" on page 175; but it is heretical only to Roman Catholics, because of the papal condemnation in 1861 of a certain form of the ontological argument.

There is a misprint, surely, on page 137—"facor" should be "factor."

C. H. DUNCAN.

Melbourne.

ESCHATOLOGY.

Scottish Journal of Theology Occasional Papers No. 2 (Oliver & Boyd Ltd., Edinburgh), 1953, pp. 90; 6/-.

The proliferation of theological societies in Britain is an indication of the present healthy state of learning in that country. Judging by the quality of these papers we may expect the stimulation of much valuable work by the newly formed "Society for the Study of Theology." At its inaugural conference it showed its intention of attacking in a constructive way the more embarrassing problems of theology, by presenting four papers on Eschatology.

"Eschatology in the New Testament," by Prof. William Manson, is a splendid summary and brilliant exposition of "the religious determination of mind by which in the Bible men are impelled to think of all history and all life by reference to an ultimate transcendent Event, an End towards which . . . the world is hastening." It is not primarily concerned with the external imagery of Scripture, but aims at reconstruction in the light of modern criticism, particularly in the spirit of the new post-critical approach to the New Testament. In the compass of such a short essay it would be hard to imagine a more judicious selection.

Prof. G. W. H. Lampe's paper on "Early Patristic Eschatology," is a learned and detailed study of the development of New Testament thought and, in particular the survival of truly biblical eschatology in spite of the many dangers from heresies which would sever the links of faith with history. The preservation of the church from these dangers is traced in the Fathers. It is to be accounted for partly by their fundamentalist attitude to the scriptures, and their realisation of the importance of history, both in retrospect with the tradition that bound them to the acts of Christ and His apostles, and also in prospect of judgment and glory to meet the real suffering and martyrdoms of history.

The third paper on "The Eschatology of the Reformation," by Prof. T. F. Torrance, contains a detailed summary of the main emphasis in Luther's eschatology, followed by a note on the influence of Butzer on Calvin, particularly in this matter. In the presentation of Calvin's eschatology, it is seen to be more comprehensive and balanced than Luther's for the reason that Calvin takes history more

seriously. Thus his doctrine of the Church as a historical community, his emphasis on the doctrine of creation, and of the renewal of the world, and of the resurrection of the body all join to preserve a truly biblical eschatology.

The final paper, on "The Modern Discussion of Eschatology," by the Rev. W. A. Whitehouse, seems to be the least satisfactory. This may be partly due to the confusion in twentieth century thought on Eschatology, and also to the failure to provide a constructive dogmatic statement upon which to judge and clarify present thought.

Four such papers, by different men and on widely separate aspects of theology can hardly be expected to show any integration of thought, and this is a serious lack in the book. In spite of the need for a courageous reconstruction these papers, in spite of their frequent recognition of the biblical necessity to take history seriously, have not yet succeeded in a clear modern statement of what the church now takes to be the concrete meaning of the words, "He shall come again with glory."

Melbourne.

F. I. ANDERSEN.

DIE ERWAEHLUNG ISRAELS NACH DEM ALTEN TESTAMENT.

By Prof. Th. C. Vriezen. Abhandlungen zur Theologie des Alten und Neuen Testaments. Edited by W. Eichrodt and O. Cullmann. No. 24 (Zwingli-Verlag, Zuerich), 1953, pp. 116; Fr. 12.50.

This is the twenty-fourth of the excellent series of monographs issued by the Zwingli-Verlag. Prof. Vriezen is motivated firstly by the statement made at Amsterdam by the then newly-constituted World Council of Churches on the Church's responsibility to the Jew both for the sufferings of Jewry and for the sharing of its Jewish Jesus with Israel; and secondly, he is brought to this study of election by the phenomenon of the renewal of the Jewish people and the rise of the State of Israel in the last few years. How can the Christian Church assert that it inherits the promises of the O.T. when Israel still claims to be the People of God? Is there any parallel between the forceful seizure of the Holy Land from the Arabs and its conquest under Joshua?

What follows is a full and careful examination of the meaning of the conception of election in the O.T., because, as the author declares, the doctrine lies at the very heart of the O.T. faith. He cites examples to show how the various Hebrew verbs which speak of God's choice of Israel are used in ordinary, non-religious language, and then examines the theological overtones of those same verbs when used for a religious purpose. Thereafter he examines the concept of election in the D school of writings, in Deutero-Isaiah and in the post-Exilic period.

"Election in the O.T.," says Vriezen, in conclusion, "is always the act of God, of his grace alone, and always comprises for man a commission. It is only from the angle of this commission that man can understand the conception of election. There are no elect ones as such in the O.T., there are only those who obey the calling to which God has called them." Obedience to election means to be raised up by God, while disobedience means rejection from being a people at all. Both activities reveal the hand of God. In Jesus Christ is the first example of one who completely fulfils God's commission; so it is only in Christ and in the Jewish-Christian community that the possibility of the existence of Israel as the People of God can

be renewed and extended. Christendom, in so far as it is aware of and obedient to its calling, is united with Israel. The Church exists only as an Israelite (Jewish) Christian Church. On the other hand, in not recognising that Jesus is the only **Bachir**, elect one, to fulfil absolutely the commission of God spoken of by Deutero-Isaiah, Israel has thereby set aside its own election, and has sunk to the level of being a people who are only half a religious community and half a natural blood group. Justice cannot be done to Vriezen's work in a few words. His study is of first importance for all those who recognise St. Paul's insistence upon the Church's need to think through her relationship to her mother, Israel.

G. A. F. KNIGHT.

Dunedin.

SHORTER NOTICES.

My Servants the Prophets, by J. E. Young (Wm. B. Eerdmans, \$3). In this volume of nine chapters, Dr. Young further demonstrates his ability as an exponent of a conservative viewpoint. The divine origin of the Prophetic institution is seen in Deut. 18:9-22 and Numbers 12:1-8. God established a prophetic line of Moses, with other Old Testament prophets partly fulfilling and Christ perfectly fulfilling the prediction of "a prophet like unto Moses." The words "nabhi," "ro'eh" and "hozeh" are discussed and it is concluded that "nabhi" refers to the prophet's relation to the people and the words "ro'eh" and "hozeh" to the prophet's inner experience with God. The verb "to prophesy" denotes speaking in the name of the Lord. There are sometimes peculiar behaviour accompaniments. Discussion is devoted to the Prophets and Theocracy (of which they are guardians); to the "bands of the prophets" and the "sons of the prophets"; and to the relation of the prophets to the cult. Dr. Young rejects the idea of a special cultic prophetism though he applauds Aubrey Johnson for his corrective to the Wellhausen school which saw opposition between cult and prophets. A splendid chapter on "Prophets False and True" concludes that True Prophets received their message directly from God, and were conscious of it. There is no parallel phenomenon in the so-called prophets of other Eastern lands. Israel's prophetic institution is unique. Great significance is seen in the fact that "one teleological thread binds together the utterances of the prophets . . . a great picture of a coming Redeemer." The volume is a sustained plea for the uniqueness and authority of God's revelation through His prophets.

J. A. Thompson.

Studies in Deuteronomy, by Gerhard von Rad (S.C.M., 7/-). This, the latest in the series of "studies in Biblical Theology," is a translation, made by David Stalker, lecturer in Biblical Studies in Edinburgh University, from the original German edition, which has been available for the last five years. The problem of Deuteronomy still attracts the minds of leading O.T. scholars. Anyone who knows von Rad's Commentary on Genesis 1-12 will come to this short work eager to discover what he has to say on a book about which there is still no unanimity of interpretation. But von Rad wisely comes to no dogmatic conclusions. He applies form-criticism to the book, and carefully separates older from younger elements, and homiletic interpretations from statutes deriving from earlier periods. "Deuteronomy is a finished, mature, beautifully proportioned and theologically clear work . . . it gathers together practically the whole of the assets

of the faith of Israel, re-sifting them and purifying them theologically . . . it is comparable with John's Gospel in the N.T. *corpus*." Von Rad then follows with studies of the "Name" and "Kabod" theologies which are obviously aspects of the flowering of Israel's faith. Thereafter he gives a short chapter on the question of the Holy War in Deuteronomy, on which he has subsequently written a whole monograph which, however, is not yet translated into English. Three further short chapters on the Provenance of Deuteronomy, the Purpose of Deuteronomy, and the Theology of History in the Book of Kings do not tell us much that older writers have not already expounded. This is especially true of the last chapter. A highly condensed paragraph on pp. 72-3 aggravates by its merely raising the problem of eschatology in Deuteronomy. We must console ourselves by remembering that von Rad's booklet is only meant to be a limited study. Yet it surely bears within it the promise of greater things to come.

The Old Testament, a Conspectus, by Theodore H. Robinson (Duckworth, 8/6). This is the latest number of the Colet Library of Modern Christian Thought and Teaching. In a short compass of 165 pages the eminent O.T. scholar gives a distillation of what modern scholarship has to say about each of the books of the O.T. in turn, who wrote them and when, their composition and so on. There is no attempt made to express the message of the O.T. or expound the contents of the books. If that is remembered, we have in telegraphic form an excellent factual presentation of the background of the O.T. Canon.

G. A. F. Knight.

The Gospel According to Isaiah. Seven sermons on Isaiah 53 by John Calvin; translated by Leroy Nixon (Eerdmans, \$2). Here we have proof of the evangelical fervour of the great Reformer and theologian. Calvin preaches as a man with a clear vision and at the same time with a weighty burden upon his soul. His passion is to present Christ as Prophet, Priest and King. For him there is no problem as to the identity of the Suffering Servant of Isaiah 53. The prophet is speaking of Christ and this passage, therefore, becomes "one of the chief foundation stones of Calvin's Christology." Throughout the sermons the doctrine of the vicarious sufferings and death of Christ is presented with emphasis. "The devil," he states, "has always tried to obscure this doctrine, because it is the principle article of our salvation." The doctrines of election and particular redemption find their appropriate place and yet the reader is continually made conscious of the warm evangelical appeal of the heart. Paragraph headings, borrowed from the French edition prepared by Pierre Marcel, provide accurate divisions and help to impress the main points of each sermon upon the mind.

Alexander Barkley.

Henry Martyn: Confessor of the Faith, by Constance Padwick (I.V.F., 4/6). Henry Martyn, scholar and saint, is one of the heroes of missionary enterprise. This is an eminently readable biography, copiously illustrated by quotations from Henry Martyn's Journals and Letters. It can be confidently recommended as a worthy introduction to one whose record and achievement has inspired a notable number to dedicate themselves to the missionary cause.

Why we believe in Jesus Christ, by H. E. W. Turner (S.P.C.K., 2/6). The Lightfoot Professor of Divinity in the University of Durham has written another suggestive study for use in "Christian Discussion Groups." It is a companion study to an earlier book: "The

Life and Person of Jesus Christ." Professor Turner has a gift for lucid exposition: he has read widely and intelligently, and he writes with attractive simplicity. The author's presuppositions will provide dissent in some quarters: he subscribes to the view (which surely must be anachronistic) that Israel had a "genius" for religion (a regrettably naturalistic concept); and he describes the Eucharist as "an extension of the Incarnation" (a phrase which, by its tedious repetition, does more to darken counsel than to illumine). There is, however, much useful material which is well expressed.

Unwilling Journey: A Diary from Russia, by Helmut Gollwitzer (S.C.M., 16/-). This is not simply another horror story. It is a penetrating and revealing analysis and critique of communism: written from the inside. The author is unsparing in his theological judgments: and his unvarnished narrative is terrifying and challenging in its picture of the living God active in both judgment and mercy. The author (Niemoeller's successor as Pastor at Dahlem in Berlin) has written a unique piece of contemporary theological commentary. The President of the Federal German Republic writes: "A great historical analysis of the theory of Bolshevism is of such a high level that this book deserves a wide circulation even as a handbook of political education." It is of interest that Gollwitzer now occupies Barth's old chair at Bonn.

Marxism: An Interpretation, by A. C. MacIntyre (S.C.M., 8/6). This is a painstaking and accurate discussion of the philosophical antecedents and presuppositions of Marxism. It will be valued by those who are prepared to grapple seriously with the theory and practice of Marxism, and who are prepared to pay the price in mental and intellectual concentration. This is a most helpful philosophical discussion of the relation between Christianity and Marxism.

Myth in the New Testament, by Ian Henderson (S.C.M., 6/-). English-speaking theologians are gradually becoming aware of the "Entmythologisierung" controversy. It is the great merit of this book that it provides a readable and factual introduction on De-mythology. It summarises Bultmann's important essay, "Neues Testament und Mythologie"; it traces Bultmann's theological antecedents; and it analyses Bultmann's conception of myth and the place of myth in religion. We warmly commend this as a theological *aperitif*.

A Philosophy of the Christian Religion, by E. J. Carnell (Eerdmans, \$6). This volume falls within the sphere of Christian apologetics, and one's estimate of its success will depend on whether or not one believes apologetics to be a legitimate form of Christian activity. If one accepts the presuppositions from which the author sets out, one must reckon this is not altogether unsuccessful attempt. The author uses biblical illustrations and incidents effectively. For example, he illustrates the failure of hedonism by reference to the life of Solomon. There is a lengthy chapter on Marxism as a rival philosophy. The author's repudiation and denunciation of Marxism is, however, a little too cock-sure; the language will appeal only to the converted. In this lengthy volume (525 pages) there are some good things and there is much verbiage.

S. Barton Babbage.

Die rechte Predigt, by Albert Schaedelin (Zwingli Verlag, Fr. 4.60). In a very simple, concise and clear way, and yet without the least superficialness, this little booklet discusses the manner of the deliverance

of the message of the Church. It stresses the point that the only legitimate message in the Church is that of God's revelation in Jesus Christ and that for this reason the preacher and the sermon are only and entirely under the authority of the Holy Scriptures. Consideration is given to the purpose of right preaching, the necessity of the text, its choice and explanation along the lines of meditation, exposition and delivery. Although the booklet does not give any new and unheard of points of view, it is remarkable for the clarity and brevity with which it gives us certain facts and rules which no preacher should ever, but many do, forget. I know of no book which, in so few words, gives so much valuable information on homiletics.

J. B. Groenewegen.

Men as Gods, by J. A. Munro Ford (Advertiser, Adelaide, 10/6). This is a selection of devotional broadcast addresses with prayers. These are gladly commended for their scriptural conception, apt illustration and spiritual edification.

Pascal's Short Life of Christ, translated by E. Cailliet and J. C. Blankenagel; *Johann Georg Hamann*, by W. Lowrie; *How the Word is made Flesh*, by E. A. Nida (Book Agency, Princeton Theological Seminary, \$0.75 each). These three small booklets comprise numbers five to seven of the Princeton pamphlets. The brief Pascalian harmony of the Gospels combines balance of presentation and vividness of expression with the marked accents of Augustinian theology. The remarkable eighteenth century existentialist, Hamann, the contemporary fellow-townsman of Kant, probably influenced Kierkegaard more than any other author. Here his life and teaching is succinctly described and assessed. The third essay on communicating the Gospel to aboriginal peoples is from the versatile translation secretary of the American Bible Society. Particularly fascinating is the description of the manner in which various primitive languages give fresh illumination to significant Bible words. These booklets are worthy additions to an already valuable series.

R. Swanton.

The Man of Sorrows, by Marcus L. Loane (Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 7/6). Canon Loane has a gift for simple and reverent exposition. One cannot avoid the impression that this, his latest study of the Passion, is a very beautiful book; and in this it differs from the hard realism and austerity of the Bible itself. Perhaps the author unwittingly creates this effect by the curious softness of his style. For example, he says of Christ, "He had passed through their midst like a sunbeam pure and golden." The effect is often spoiled by an exaggerated use of alliteration. Thus "His face would yet be bruised and beaten by the buffets of base underlings, soiled and sodden with the spittle of vile satellites"; this is the worst, but not the only example. This atmosphere is also developed by the frequent use of obsolete words (nede, plash, mien, fell, dastard, churl, minion). Perhaps this is due to the fact that, judging from the Bibliography, few contemporary studies have been used in the preparation of this book. However, these slight deficiencies are offset by a cautious and sensitive penetration into the mysteries of Christ's sorrows. As a Biblical study it lacks the strength and vigour of Schilder's magnificent trilogy, and the theological insight that relates "this enigmatic suffering . . . to the eternal justice of God." But as a meditation on "The Man of Sorrows" it will prove a real devotional treasure.

F. I. Andersen.

BOOKS RECEIVED (Mention here neither implies nor precludes subsequent comment).

Blackwell: "Prophet and Priest in Old Testament" (Reprint), A. C. Welch, 10/6; "The Evangelicals at Oxford, 1735-1871," J. S. Reynolds, 25/-.

Chr. Kaiser, Muenchen: "Theologie der lutherischen Bekenntnisschriften," E. Schlink, D.M. 12.

Eerdmans: "Fundamentals of Practical Dutch Grammar," C. Lambrechtse; "What is Calvinistic Philosophy," J. M. Spier, \$1.50; "Miracles" (Reprint), B. B. Warfield, \$3.50.

Faber: "The Transcendent Unity of Religions," F. Schuon, 21/-.

Independent: "Essays in Orthodox Dissent," "A Layman in the Ministry," "More Sermons of a Layman" (Reprints), B. L. Manning, 7/6 each; "The Old Testament and Present-Day Preaching," S. Myers, 4/6; "A Text for the Day," S. M. Watts, 1/-; "How to Say Your Prayers," W. E. Hodgson and H. A. Hamilton, 1/-; "Companion to Congregational Praise," ed. K. L. Parry, 30/-; "A Book of Devotional Religion," ed. N. Micklem, 7/6.

I.V.F.: "The New Bible Commentary," ed. F. Davidson, 35/-; "The Christian and His Bible," D. Johnson, 6/-.

Kok, Kampen: "Scheeben's Doctrine of Divine Adoption," E. H. Palmer.

Longmans: "The Hope of Jesus," R. Dunkerley, 18/9 (Aus.); "There's an Answer Somewhere," M. Knight and L. S. Hawkes, 9/6 (Aus.).

Muhlenberg, Philadelphia: "God Hidden and Revealed," J. Dillenberger, \$2.50.

Oxford: "Muhammad at Mecca," W. Montgomery Watt, 33/6 (Aus.); "Asking Them Questions" (A Selection), ed. R. S. Wright, 10/6 (Aus.).

S.C.M.: "The Third World Conference on Faith and Order," ed. O. S. Thompkins, 21/-; "The Meaning of Ecumenical," W. A. Visser's Hooft, 2/-; "The Evolution of the Christian Year," A. A. McArthur, 15/-; "The Household of God," L. Newbigin, 12/6; "Genesis I-XI," A. Richardson, 7/6; "Basic Economic Problems," J. F. Sleeman, 10/6; "Mercy and Sacrifice," N. Snaith, 7/6; "The Trinity in Contemporary Theology," C. Welch, 18/-; "Interpreting Theology," D. D. Williams, 10/6.

Watch Tower, New York: "New World Translation of the Hebrew Scriptures," Vol. I.

Zwingli, Zuerich: "Das Wort und der Moderne Mensch," E. Brunner, Fr. 5; "Verheissung und Erfuellung" (Second Edition), W. G. Kuemmel, Fr. 15; "Pascals Bild vom Menschen," A. Rich, Fr. 13.95; "Das Leiden des Unschuldigen in Babylon und Israel," J. J. Stamm, Fr. 5.50.

Zondervan: "The Art of Effective Teaching," C. G. Eavey, \$3.75.

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